

A [751 cont.]

181 Abkhaz are similarly endowed, but are distinguished from the former by greater irritability, instability, garrulity, politeness, and, like the Mingrel, are notorious thieves. [Fig. 442 appears here.]

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[619] The Abkhaz now consist of 24 or 25 kin groups or communities; as tribes, the following have been mentioned earlier: the Ubykh between Khamise and Shakhe, the Abadzekh between Pshekups and Byelaya, the Dzhigeth between Shakhe and Mzymta; farther south up to the Bzyb, the Bzubb, up to the Kodor, the true Abkhaz, and in their hinterland the Tsebelidin; up to the Galisga, the Abshav and, bordering on Mingrelia, the Samurzakhan.

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[177]
[302] Dress. The Abkhaz women wear Cherkess, or nowadays usually European, clothing (see Fig. 443), the men the Cherkess coat (see Fig. 441); they usually shave the head bare.

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291 The Cherkess attire for men has spread widely among the Cossacks and [752] [Fig. 443 appears here] through all of Caucasla as far as the lowland Georgians in the south, and the women's attire has been adopted by the neighboring Abkhaz, Karachai, and Osset. The men's costume (see Fig. 442) consists of a short (yana) of white linen or red taffeta, baggy pants, a silk embroidered undergarment with a collar, a long robe (tsié) open at the chest, made of black or gray cloth, with cartridge pockets (khazyr) on the breast, narrow belt strap, leather leggings, sandals of leather or linden bark, cap (papakh) of white or black sheepskin (see Fig. 444), and in addition, for bad weather, a black coat (ts'auka, burka) of goat and sheep wool, with a hood (g'etapt) that is draped around in such a manner that the right arm remains free. They cut their hair off short, leaving only a braided tuft (haidar). Out-of-doors they carry a dagger (kama, see Fig. 449) on the belt, and from a sword-belt they hang a saber, the blade of which is often Damascus, Khorassan, Hungarian, or Lezgin work and which is often inlaid with silver or gold on a black background, as are also the studs of the horse's harness and other parts of the armament. This further consists of: pistol (see Fig. 450), flintlock rifle with

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196 When the woman places the dough on the hearth, she holds over it a
 [264] pure *suiguni* (a round of cheese),¹ from the centre of which she cuts out a small round piece and places it in the middle of the maizebread; with the exception of this middle part, the maizebread is lented. When placing the dough on the hearth, she scatters bits of it, first in the direction of the sea, and then towards the mountains; and, as if calling to the goats, she says, *reyt, reyt* (the goat call), and mutters the following prayer: "Thou, *jabrān*, the great part of the great god (*Ayt'ar intswakhwədə jabrān*)! Grant us the warmth of thine eyes and of thy heart. Be the guardian of our herds! Bear goodwill unto us so that no harm should befall our herds, except their old moulted wool and old dung!" Apart from this introduction, which is always used, each says an improvised prayer. After this is over, as if calling to the goats they again exclaim, *reyt, reyt*, turning alternatively towards the sea and the mountains.

When the maizebread is baked, and the goats have returned from the fields, the eldest man in the family prays to god *jabrān*, muttering approximately the formula quoted above. The whole family joins him in uttering *dāmen*, and the candles are lighted.

It is to be noted that during the prayer the participants also invoke the "god" *mkyamgaria*,* and say: "May thy bounty never fall short on us." It seems to me that this deity is no other than the "Megrelianized" angels Michael and Gabriel (Geo. *Mik'el da Gabrieli*), with whom Christianity endeavoured, in vain, to replace *Ayt'ar* and his "parts" of gods; up to this day the pagan deities still take precedence, although they also pray to *mkyamgaria*.

The maizebread is first cut into four parts with two strokes of the knife, and only afterwards into small pieces; the neighbours are not forgotten either, a piece being sent to each. The maizebread is baked in rhododendron (*ā-k'wazhwe*)† leaves.

2. *Zhwabrān* (god of cows) *

This rite is performed in the same manner as *jabrān*. The prayer begins thus: "Thou *zhwabrān*, the great part (of the great deity)

104 * The palatal or mid-lingual semi-vowel "y" in "A'y", "gy", as also in "hy", "wy", "sy", "gy", etc., met with in this article, lingualizes or iotises the preceding consonant sound, the combinations "A'y", "gy", etc., representing lingualized or iotized varieties of "A'", "g" (pronounced hard, as in "go"), etc. For the pronunciation of simple radical sounds see p. 329. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

† See p. 131, note *.

In Abkhasian *ist'ayashwe*, pure cheese; cf. Megrelian (I. Kipshidze, *The Megrelian-Russian Dictionary*, s.v. *ist'ari*) *ist'ashwe*, which is also an Abkhasian expression, denoting "pure (s-ist'ye), good (ā-iss)".

[191] * In Guria this observance is known under the name of *beolebs* (an abstract form of *beash*, cowhouse) or *ilorobs*; the latter probably has some connection with St. George of Ikon. The Georgians often call a cow *ilora*. In Megrelia the god of cattle-breeding is known as *Zhimi-Aut'ar*.

796
[69] On this day also they "lay the table", that is, prepare a dinner, for the souls of the deceased, unless the day happens to be one of abstinence, i.e. Wednesday or Friday. In the latter event the feast takes place on the following day.

(e) *Adsyła-nòhwa*

On the same day of the Assumption is observed *Adsyła-nòhwa* (cf. II (10)). The children are taken to a meadow where they are told to place their right legs against a tree. Each holding an *akwakwdr* in the right hand, they remain meekly in this position until the eldest in the family has addressed the prayer to "the spirit of the tree", entreating "the great part of the deity of the tree" to safeguard them from giddiness, from falling off the tree, and from injuries. The children must eat their *akwakwdr* without removing their legs from the tree.

(f) *Andna-gùnda* (the goddess of bees)

796
[31] This is both a spring and a summer feast.

In the spring, when the bees begin to hive, the eldest ("pure") woman of the family takes some hirse (Geo. *p'elvi*) and an egg, and enters the apiary, where she passes the offerings three times over the hives, and prays to the goddess of the bees, *Andna-gùnda*: "Submitting these as a pledge that the established offering will be made at the proper time, I humbly entreat thee, *Andna-gùnda*, to be the guardian of our bees; safeguard them from all illnesses, multiply them, and grant them a good crop!" Hirse and the egg are hung over the apiary.

In the summer, between the 15th July and the end of August, before the gathering of the first honeycombs, more during August, on a Thursday or Saturday, the promised offering to the goddess *Andna-gùnda* is made. A large corncake (*a-mgal*), stuffed with cheese, is baked, and placed on one of the hives; also an egg. The family kneel in front of the offering, and the "pure" woman again invokes the mercy of *Andna-gùnda* upon the honey bees, and says an improvised prayer. The family repeat a long drawn out *dàmen*.

After the ceremony, she divides the corncakes crosswise, into four parts, with two strokes of the knife; and cuts these into smaller pieces. The family sit down there and then and dine. They do not forget the neighbours, sending a small piece each. The remains are placed in a basket and hung up in the apiary. Everybody passing by is obliged to enter the apiary and bless the honey bees and, scattering about a little hirse, eat a piece of corncake.

[178] In ancient times when the Abkhasians irreproachably observed all the rites, the gods were more merciful to them. Thus, the goddess